322 fire and is then tarred for better glide. As the
481 skis are intended for cross-country skiing, up-
hill as well as downhill travel, they must be
very light and carefully constructed.

286 As is to be expected, women have maintained
a greater interest in handicraft than the men.
Practically every farmhouse has a hand loom,
and this is not rare even among the city families.
Traditional skills are promoted and developed
by various schools for weaving and sewing
531 which are quite well attended. The Karelian
286 women have of old been famous for their em-
broideries and lacy weaving patterns, the
western Finnish women for their decorative
linens and rugs. In certain localities lace-
making has developed into a real occupation;
the most famous among these is the small

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seashore city of Rauma in southwestern Finland, where the skill has been preserved since the Middle Ages as an inheritance from the nuns in the city's cloister. The most magnificent products of Finnish handicraft, however, are the so-called ryijy rugs. The weaving of these has been limited to western Finland, especially in the provinces of Häme and Satakunta. The Finnish museums have several hundreds of them, and as many are found in private homes all over the country. These rugs are made of wool by the process of tying small pieces of different [386] colors next to each other to form a pattern. The women dye their wool with colors extracted from plant roots and leaves. Both the colors and the patterns give proof of a refined taste and artistic imagination. The ryijys were originally

531 meant for bedcovers, and every girl had several
286 of them in her dowery. Today the ryijys are used as tapestries or rugs, and since the beginning of this century interest in them has been considerable. Old patterns are copied and new ones created by design artists, and it is difficult to find a Finnish home without a specimen, good or bad, of this native art.

892 The native costumes also reflect the people's artistic taste. In most localities they were already abandoned from everyday use more than a century ago, but they are still commonly worn by girls and women during summer for festive occasions. The men, on the contrary, do not want to don breeches, striped weskits and buckle shoes except for folk dancing exhibitions. As for the women's dresses, almost